1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Koitor, all meaning Lowland Koitor, and the plains below are either Dorbhum, Hatiyabhum or Kalpatti; Dor Koitor and Dorbhum, the terms most commonly used, are probably the source of the expression Dhur Koitor said to be used fairly generally in the Central Provinces to designate the ordinary Gond as distinct from the one who gives himself social airs as a Raj-Gond; a Gondi word has been assimilated to the Hindi '*dhur*' or '*dhul*' meaning 'dust', and the Gond commoner referred to as the 'Dust' Gond. Hatiya-bhum is simply the land of the *hat* or bazaar. *Kalpatti* is the ordinary Halbi term for lowlands, which we have already seen applied as the name of two *parganas* in Antagarh. Hatiya is similarly the name of a *pargana* in the north of Kondagaon.

Hill Marias

The Hill Maria tracts are shown by the letter E in the ethnographic map. An account of their country and distribution has been given already in Chapter II, pages 26-8. The estimate of 11,500 population is fairly accurate; I examined the actual census returns of all the Hill Maria villages except the five included in the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, and obtained a total of 11,361 (5,702 males and 5,659 females). There can only be 140 or 150 persons at the most in the Mangnar villages. Since the census, many Hill Marias have come back to the Abujhmar, chiefly from the Ahiri zamindari; it was found when the poll-tax settlement was effected in 1932 that 240 able-bodied males had so returned; probably, therefore, the Hill Maria population is now just over 12,000 in Bastar. There had in the past been a considerable exodus of Marias from the old Paralkot zamindari, owing to the zamindar's oppression. As they consider the new conditions in Bastar better than those in Ahiri, more may be expected to drift back into Bastar.

The tract is extremely homogeneous. In 22 Hill Maria villages in Kutru with 1,443 Hill Marias the only non-Marias are 38 Rawats and 1 Halba; in 9 Hill Maria villages in Dantewara there are 879 Marias to 3 Telanga, 98 Rawats and 19 Mahras. The Rawats are only in the villages near the plains where they are employed by Marias to tend cattle and are beginning to teach them the use of the plough and the milking of cattle; they speak Maria as fluently as Halbi, and in outward appearance are scarcely distinguishable from Marias. Most of the Hill Maria villages are in Antagarh, and have hardly any outsiders except occasional Rawats or liquor contractors. The few blacksmiths are really Marias, knowing no other language than Maria, having the same clans as the Marias and still occasionally marrying Maria girls; though, as among other tribes, there is always a tendency to look down on the blacksmith,

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and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Fat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *ahomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutla'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

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beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *paili*[1] of *kuthi*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *paik-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes of reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *gorla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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The favourite basketry material is bamboo, in thin strips varying from half an inch to three-quarters in width. Occasionally the wefts are of reed, coloured twine, or bamboos pared down to the thickness of twigs. Patterns are produced by using warps of dry bamboo strips from the heart-wood, and wefts of green strips from the outer rind. Nearly all the Hill Maria basketry is twilled, with each weft passing over and then under two or three warps, the topmost edge or rim being twilled-twined with a weft of thin bamboo pared to the size of twigs; and sometimes an ornamental plaited ring is worked around the central circumference. The measure baskets made by the Hill Marias and brought by them to the markets for sale or for measuring out the grain which they sell or the salt which they buy are of different shapes and sizes for each commodity. The grain measure is a *bhurki*, eight of which make a *soli*[1] or half a seer, i.e. a measure containing about a pound's weight of rice. There are slightly different sizes for rice, *kutki*, mustard and pulses, according to the size of the different grains; all *bhurki* measures are little round baskets with slightly convex bottoms and uniform in diameter at top and bottom. For salt, a rather similar basket called a *kochli* is made, sufficient to hold one pice worth of salt, of roughly the same capacity as a *bhurki*; they are graduated for smaller quantities by being plastered inside with varying quantities of mud or cow-dung. *Mahua* flowers are measured by being heaped on shallow dishes called *kurli*, shaped like inverted cones or Annamese hats; each should contain 4 *pailis*, or 128 *bhurkis*, and those that I tested were remarkably accurate. The Hill Marias sell also the flat basket dishes already referred to, but rather larger than those they use for their own plates; they are called *bediya*.

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2. Iron-work

Frequent mention has already been made of the Maria blacksmiths, and some of their tempering and manufacturing methods have been described in the section dealing with weapons and tools. These blacksmiths appear to be of Maria stock, speaking the Maria language, indistinguishable physically, having the same phratries and clans, and following the same customs. Enquiry in the big blacksmith settlements at Bagmundi Panera in Jagdalpur tahsil, at Kamargudem below the Arapur ghat in Konta tahsil (both Bison-horn blacksmith villages), and from the Hill Maria blacksmiths at Nugur in Kutru zamindari, showed in every case that some of the blacksmiths either had themselves once been cultivators or had fathers who were originally

[1] 5 *tola* or Government rupees' weight of rice is contained in one *bhurki*: 8 *bhurki* = 1 *soli*, 4 *soli* = 1 *paili*, 2 *paili* = 1 *ori*, 2 *ori* = 1 *kurli*, 20 *ori* = 1 *khandi* = 40 *paili*.

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cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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and removed. This air passage serves for the forge the same purpose as the earthen pipe *tuyère* for the smelting furnace, and the bamboo pipes of the bellows are arranged to converge at its entrance. The hole originally excavated is filled with *mahua* charcoal.

The smiths' only tools, which they make themselves, are the pointed and blunt ended hammer or *mutti* already mentioned, and long iron pincers with long noses, which they call *andes*. They generally have large and small hammers. The haft is inserted in a hole right through the maximum thickness of the head, at a point about a third of its length from the broad flat end; the remaining two-thirds tapers to a rough point.

3. Brass-work

The brass workers already frequently mentioned, unlike the blacksmiths, are by now practically a distinct caste. Hindus and Murias call them Ghasias, which is the name applied elsewhere in Central India, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa to one of the lowest and most degraded of the untouchable castes, whose usual occupation is grass-cutting and horse-tending, while some sections make combs for the hair or for weavers' looms. Even in Bastar, where many of them are skilled artisans, the wildest Maria holds them in profound contempt. The Maria calls them Gharwa. In outward appearance there is little difference between them and their Muria or Maria neighbours, and probably in the remote past they may have been recruited from these or other aboriginal stocks. Rohilla traders and oppressive zamindari managers in the past have often employed Ghasia duns to extract money from Marias; such is the Maria's feeling of degradation if a Ghasia comes near his house that the villagers would combine to pay a miserable rupee or two to these extortioners to get rid of their foul presence.

The Gharwas buy old brass or bronze in the markets or through Hindu middlemen. They make their brass ornaments, spoons, bells and Muria hunting horns by the *cire-perdue* process. The first or inner core of their moulds is made of earth from white-ants' hills, and known as *mati-kutan*; the earth is puddled with water and moulded to the needed shape in the hands. This is dried in the sun, and when hard covered with a coating of beeswax, on which the desired pattern is made in relief with long thin threads or small pellets of beeswax; various patterns can be produced by whipping these threads round the circumference of the *mati-kutan* core, or applying them on the sides of its plain wax covering in coils, spirals, suns, moons, lozenges, twined, or in any other pattern; and the pellets are used to produce bands of dots. The wax is warmed till it is pliant in the hands, and then forced through a tool called a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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326 *pichhi* for the making of these thin wax threads. The *pichhi* consists of two parts each shaped like the letter T, but with a short stem and the cross-piece or handle three times as long as the stem. One T-piece is entirely of hard wood, handle and stem being cylindrical and smoothly rounded; but the stem of the second T-piece is hollowed so that the solid stem of the first may fit closely in it, and at its bottom it has a brass cap with holes like the lid of a pepper pot. A lump of soft wax is placed in this hollow stem, and then the solid stem of the other T-piece is fitted into the hollow socket, and the Gharwa presses the two cross-piece handles together in one hand, so as to force wax through the perforations like meat through a mincing machine.

When the core has been covered with wax and the wax pattern, it is known as *main-kutan*, *main* meaning wax. The *main-kutan* is covered over closely with another layer of white-ant clay with a drain-hole left at one end; this clay must be pressed firmly on to the wax pattern, to take the impress of it. It is dried and heated enough to melt the wax, which is run off from the drain-hole. It remains to replace the melted wax with molten metal. The *main-kutan* as it stands is not strong enough, and so it is again covered over with a thick coating of white-ant clay mixed with water in which certain leaves and grasses have been cooked, which gives the clay a greenish colour. At the top, over the drain-hole through which the wax was poured out, a large clay-cup or *khondi* is plastered as part of this new clay covering, and the whole affair is now known as a *kaskut-chancha*. This is hardened in the sun, and then baked in a furnace with the *khondi* uppermost; the metal melts and falls through the drain-hole into the place occupied by the wax, and takes the pattern left by the wax on the clay that was plastered over it.

323 There are no potters in the heart of the Abujhmar hills, partly because in the valleys of the clear rocky mountain streams there is no suitable clay, and partly because the Hill Maria still grows and uses gourds for many purposes, or else uses bamboo tubes. But all now use earthen pots at least for cooking, and for the Pot of the Departed, many also for drawing and storing water. At every market, therefore, in the valleys and plains below there are potters who do a considerable trade with the Hill Marias, and some have settled in their villages like Nugur and Lakka between the Kutru foot of the hills and the Indrawati, while, of course, potters are plentiful in the Bison-horn country. [564] The potters belong to the great Kumhar potter caste, at least in name, though here again many differ little in type from surrounding Marias. They use the common type of Indian potters' wheel, and

4. Pottery

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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623 692 tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.

623 622 692 564 Purely social matters, breaches of caste or tribal prejudices, were left by the State to the jurisdiction of caste *panchayats* and of the caste headmen, appointed for nearly all Hindu and semi-Hindu castes in the State by the Ruling Chief in the tahsils and by the zamindars for their own zamindaris; after the first appointment these offices tended to become hereditary in the family of the person appointed, the succession having to be recognized by the Ruling Chief, from whom the headmen of leading castes would receive a turban as insignia of office. A register of these headmen is kept, and appeals from their decisions in caste *panchayat* in social matters lie direct to the Ruling Chief, this power during the long minority of the late Maharani of Bastar having been exercised on her behalf by a relative of hers who manages the State temples at Jagdalpur. But the State never appointed caste headmen for Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who retained their own tribal customs in these matters, and whose *panchayats* did not, like those of Hindu castes, deal only with social matters, but also with petty crime and with the administration and agricultural management of the villages and clans, as well as their relations with the officers of the State. To some extent the Murias were in the same position; but in certain areas caste headmen had been appointed for them, and they had learnt to defer to the Palace as the ultimate arbiter in social matters, while great numbers of their villages had been granted to alien lessees who asserted their own authority and belittled that of the traditional headmen and *panchayats*.

622 623 692 A text for the enquiries which I had made into the *panchayats* of the Marias was the following passage from the appendix to the chapter on caste (Chapter IX, p. 239) in Marten's 1911 *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*:—

> 'The following account of the tribal council of the Maria Gonds of South Chanda has been sent in by the Manager of the Ahiri estate, and is worth quoting almost in full. Every genuine Maria village has a village headman or *patel*, called the *Gaita*. In addition to his office as a *gaita* he generally exercises also the hereditary functions of a *Bhumia* or religious headman of the village. This dual office used formerly to be held as a rule by one and the same man in the village, and, with a few exceptions here and there owing to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia*, it is still so held in the majority of cases. The man enjoying the double office is therefore the patriarch of the whole village community, and his authority in the village (or a group of two or three villages) under him is supreme. This post is hereditary. The caste has not a standing Panchayat or governing body. It is called together when required. But the system prevailing in the caste is far more developed and is in certain respects more far-reaching than the ordinary Panchayat
623 692 system prevailing in other castes. The village *Gaita*, on receiving a report of a misdemeanour or other occurrence in the village, calls two or three elders of the village together—the number is not fixed, nor is it necessary to call the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
●564 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take
684 food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised
688 Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described
689 (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
564 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
783 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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1913 case (see page 283 above) in which two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl with whom they had been cohabiting, their parents and brothers all had to be purified by the *pargana* headman, and the actual murderers were purified by him a year after the murder; one of the main reasons for the villagers hushing up the crime was the belief that greater harm might have resulted to the clan if the Lohar girl had borne a child to the murderers than from them killing her. In 1926, Oyami Masa of Malhanar in the Kutru Mar hill *pargana*, an orphan boy six years old, was outcasted for taking some food from a Ghasia who was spending the night in the village *kos-gotul*[1] (strangers' rest-house) and found the child half-starved. As soon as the villagers heard of this they regarded him as outcasted. They realized, however, that he could not be expected to pay the expenses of the purification ceremony, and as they themselves had had poor harvests and were not in a position to meet the cost just then, they built a hut for the child at some distance from the rest of the village, and there he had to live for two years, till they could pay to purify him; meanwhile they provided food for him, leaving it for him at some distance from his hut. After two years had elapsed they subscribed eight annas cash as remuneration to Arki Burga of Jegur, the *Sendhia*, ten *paili* of rice and a *paili* of pulse, and invited the *Sendhia* to come and purify the boy. The men of the neighbouring villages of the clan were also asked to attend. At the bidding of the *Sendhia* the villagers built seven small huts in a row, and the boy had to pass through each in turn, each being burnt down as soon as he had passed through it. The *Sendhia* himself then shaved the whole of the boy's head, including even his crown-tuft. This done, the boy was taken to the river, made to bathe thrice and brought back to the village, where the *Sendhia* burnt his tongue with a *karra* (*Odsa marra*) twig, made him drink a little from a cup of milk into which he had dipped a piece of gold, and sprinkled the rest of the milk over the boy and the onlookers. The boy then fetched water, and in this the *Sendhia* boiled the rice and pulses, and served the cooked food to the boy and all the clansmen present. This incident typifies the way in which Marias combine to relieve each other's difficulties. The postponement of the caste feast until the offender has had time to collect all that is necessary is almost a rule of tribal life, and one that might with advantage be copied by the pharasaical elders of Hindu castes in British India. The social offence may offend the clan-god, and so its expiation is the concern of the whole clan, which therefore must help the offender gradually to raise the cost of the expiation ceremonies.

[1] See page 100 above.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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and uncomplicated view is correct. Social problems are usually very intricate and very simple solutions have so far always been found wanting.

'It cannot be denied, however, that alcoholic liquor is liable to change an individual's mode of reaction, and therefore plays an important part as a crimino-etiological factor. The most prominent psychological effects of alcohol are: emotional changes, usually in the direction of euphoria and increased irritability, but occasionally towards dysphoria (especially in the later stages of intoxication); reduced inhibition of drive impulses, particularly of a sexual nature; more optimistically coloured judgements; a reckless disposition; reduced control of actions; increased physical mobility, with a tendency to impulsive and thoughtless actions; a general lowering of the moral level. These effects indicate that intoxication is conducive to certain kinds of criminality, such as acts of violence—assault, manslaughter, rape and other sexual crimes, defamation and resistance to the police. Alcohol is, as a matter of fact, a more or less important contributory cause in many such crimes'.[1]

Typical crimes of drunkenness among the Maria may be briefly illustrated. A man and his wife were illegally distilling mahua liquor in a field. They both got very drunk on the fresh spirit and as they went staggering home, the woman fell and broke the pot, and her husband beat and killed her in a drunken fury.[2] One day a party of men met to gamble. One of them (as is generally the case, since gambling is not an aboriginal vice) was a Mahara. The party drank a lot of salphi juice, and perhaps some mahua spirit as well. There was a quarrel and the Mahara beat one of the Maria, a serious matter involving the latter's excommunication. The Maria in his drunken rage killed the Mahara and then gave himself up to the police.[3]

Twelve out of the thirteen cases where murder was due to drinking landa rice-beer occurred at festivals. For example, at one festival a man abused his elder brother's wife for not tethering the cattle properly or clearing away the cow-dung. She abused him in return, and in his drunken fit he stabbed her with an arrow.[4] At another festival party,

[1] Kinberg, op. cit., p. 211.
[2] Case No 26.
[3] Case No 35.
[4] Case No 43.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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697 desire while in jail. Boti of Telam declared that the doctor
831 had made them all impotent by medicine put in the food. On the other hand, Pandru of Chichari said that he frequently suffered from erections in jail and from nocturnal emissions. Naturally, however, the worst thing about jail-life is the deprivation of the company of women, though many Maria would modify this by saying that it is rather the whole family atmosphere, houses, children, cattle as well as the wife, that was missed. When I asked one youth what jail-life was like, he said, 'No wife, no bazaar, no children, no family'. But the thing that most oppressed him in jail was the silence.

697 The food in jail is excellent, far better than the prisoners get in their own homes. Since 1935, a special effort has been made to improve the health of the prisoners among whom at one period there had been a rather heavy mortality. The result has been highly satisfactory. There was only 1 death in 1938, 2 in 1939 and 4 in 1940. Accommodation in the jail is for 308 prisoners and the daily average is between 210 and 230. Special measures are taken against respiratory diseases, notably influenza. Phyrnoderma (toad-skin), which was one of the chief causes of reduced vitality among aboriginal prisoners, has been practically banished by the prophylactic administration of meat and cod liver oil. The ex-convicts generally grumble at the food and declare that they are continually unwell, but all reports agree in saying that they actually eat heartily and keep very fit. I think the real fact is that the food is unfamiliar to them and that many of them suffer from nervousness and a general psychic depression which makes them feel wretched, even though their actual bodily health is excellent. Several prisoners have declared how they long for roots and the gruels prepared in the ordinary way at home.

697 The work given to the prisoners varies. Some of the
564 Maria work in the kitchens, and it is interesting that the Hindu prisoners respect their social status and agree to eat from them. Ghasia and Panka are not admitted into the jail kitchen. Maria and Muria do not do sweepers' work in the jail,[1] though when a man is hanged Maria prisoners deal

[1] But I believe that Gond prisoners in the Central Provinces are made to work as sweepers, a thing that should never be allowed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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697 564 with the corpse. Short-term prisoners, suitably shackled, are allowed beyond the walls to work in the gardens of the Palace and the higher State officials. Other prisoners learn to make baskets and chiks. But the main prison industry in Jagdalpur, as throughout India, is weaving. Some of the Maria have become experts at this art. I was told that Kunjami Malle and Marvi Tibru were excellent at it, and that Marami Dhurwa of Palnar was so good that he was sent to Raipur for training. In 1940 the receipts from jail industries exceeded Rs 10,000.

697 286 564 Unfortunately no aboriginal prisoner is able to take advantage after his release of the training he receives in jail. For weaving is regarded as the monopoly of the low caste Ganda and Mahara, and no aboriginal will ever degrade himself by practising it. Should he do so, he would be excommunicated, he would be unable to marry his daughters and he would be forbidden access to his clan and village festivals. I have constantly enquired about this and especially as to whether there is any reason behind it. Nobody seems to know the origin of the taboo. It may date from the days when the aboriginals did not use cloth at all, and regarded it as something foreign and alien. It may have simply come into being because of the Maria's dislike and scorn for the particular castes which practise weaving. It is not impossible, of course, that the Mahara and the Ganda themselves have encouraged the idea so as to enjoy the monopoly of trade. If all the Maria ex-convicts were to set up looms and make their own cloth, the existing weavers would be hard hit financially. I met one Maria who had tried to carry on his weaving work after a term in jail. But there had been such a commotion about it that he had to abandon the project.

000 It is a pity, I think, that some art or craft could not be taught to aboriginal prisoners, not only in Bastar but throughout India, which would be of value to them after their release. In five, ten or fifteen years a man could become an expert carpenter or wood-carver, a first-rate cook, an admirable market gardener. The Maria do learn a little gardening but they might do more, and carpentry on a large scale would be invaluable. For the aboriginal blacksmiths, whether they be Maria Lohar in Bastar or Agaria and Asur